

MINUTES
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission Meeting
Montana Wild Center - Helena, MT
APRIL 12, 2012

Commission Members Present: Bob Ream, Chairman; Dan Vermillion, Vice-Chairman; Ron Moody; A.T. Stafne; Shane Colton.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Staff Present: Joe Maurier, Director, and FWP Staff.

Guests: See April 12, 2012 Commission file folder for sign-in sheet.

Work Session on Commission Policy.

Topics of Discussion:

1. Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Minutes of March 8, 2012 Commission Meeting
3. Approval of Commission Expenses through March, 2012
4. Commission Reports
5. Director's Report
6. 2012 Moose, Sheep, Goat, Deer and Elk License Auction Rules – Proposed
7. Repeal Outdated Commission Policies – Final
8. Nevada Spring Creek Water Rights Transfer and Conversion – Endorsement
9. Statewide Fish Management Plan – Update
10. No-Wake Areas at all Commercial Boat Marinas Statewide - Administrative Rule – Final
11. Keep Cool Hills Cooperative Management Area Biennial Rule – Final
12. Stacey Creek Right-of-Way Easement – Final
13. Marshall Creek WMA Phase III Acquisition – Endorsement
14. Full Curl WMA Acquisition - Final
15. 2012 Grazing & Sharecrop Leases – Final
 - Dome Mountain Grazing Lease
 - Beartooth WMA – Polloch Meadows Ranch Grazing Lease
 - Blackleaf WMA Grazing Lease
 - Ear Mountain – Gollehon Ranch Grazing Lease
 - Ear Mountain – Salmond Ranch Grazing Lease
16. Madison Valley Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction – Endorsement
17. 2013 Potential Bighorn Sheep Transplant and Augmentation – Endorsement
18. Special Mountain Lion License Allocation Adjustment– Proposed
19. 2012 Mountain Lion Quotas – Proposed
20. Open Microphone – Public Opportunity to Address Additional FWP Issues

1. **Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance.** Chairman Ream called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Approval of the Commission Meeting Minutes of March 8, 2012.**

Action: Moody moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the March 8, 2012 minutes. Motion carried.

3. **Approval of the March Commission Expense Report.**

Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the expense report as presented. Motion carried.

4. Commission Reports.

Moody has received many calls over the last month regarding wolf and bison issues, as well as miscellaneous items that folks became aware of after they received their regulation booklet. He attended a Citizens Advisory Council meeting and a Devil's Kitchen meeting where it was made clear that many sportsmen feel FWP should not offer so many special opportunities for youth hunting and angling. Providing special youth opportunities is not nearly as popular an idea as has been thought.

Colton stated that some actions taken by the Commission are indeed appreciated. For example, Jeffrey's Landing in Region 5. Jeffrey's Landing is a heavily utilized fishing access site; acquiring this access site was a good move by FWP. Recently FWP placed a dock at the site, complete with a brass plaque that describes who Jeffrey was. The Commission does good things in developing resources.

Ream reported that he has received several calls regarding the regulation change for permits for hunting from a vehicle. Those permits may be restored in the future under modified definitions of "disabled". Legislative action must be taken. He also has received several complaints relative to youth hunts, and said perhaps there will need to be a change in the age definition. He also made a presentation to the Ravalli Fish and Wildlife Association.

Vermillion reported that he has received a high volume of calls regarding the bison translocation, and has had many folks stop at his office as well. He said it was the right decision. The MOU is a sound, comprehensive document. Hopefully, folks will learn they can coexist with the bison. Wolves continue to be an issue. He attended a Skyline Sportsmen meeting, which proved to be disappointing.

Stafne had no report at this time.

5. Director's Report. Director Maurier reported that a hearing was held regarding the bison translocation. He asked Becky Jakes-Dockter to provide an overview of that hearing. Becky Jakes-Dockter, FWP Legal Counsel, stated that a preliminary injunction hearing was held yesterday in front of Judge McKeon in Chinook. The purpose was to determine if the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) should continue. The judge heard oral arguments from the attorneys, and the MOU was discussed in depth. The EA and Record of Decision address SB202 requirements. The public process was adhered to, and that fact was made clear to those present. The judge wanted thirty days to deliberate, so he extended the TRO. FWP is not to move any bison from Fort Peck to Fort Belknap during the 30-days.

6. 2012 Moose, Sheep, Goat, Deer and Elk License Auction Rules – Proposed. State law provides for an auction process to distribute the moose, sheep and goat licenses, and an auction/lottery process to distribute the mule deer and elk licenses, all for conservation purposes. The Commission must decide on the criteria and process for selecting conservation organizations to conduct the auctions/lotteries each year, and then solicit proposals to do so. Legislation requires that at least 90 percent of the license auction proceeds be returned to FWP, and the organization may retain up to 10 percent of the proceeds to cover reasonable auction expenses. Organizations that opt to retain up to 10 percent of the proceeds are required to document expenses associated with the auction. The 2013 annual auction/lottery rules reflect a change to the retention of up to 10 percent to cover reasonable auction expenses. FWP is preparing an Administrative Rule for the Commission to consider that would replace the annual rule. By changing this annual rule to an ARM, FWP would solicit interested organizations, but the Commission would still retain the authority to choose which organization gets which license.

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion that the Commission adopt the tentative 2013 auction/lottery rules for the moose, sheep, goat, mule deer and elk licenses as proposed by FWP, and direct FWP to pursue an ARM process for this rule.

Moody questioned the accounting of the auction funds; are funds spent on the designated species or on something else.

Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Bureau Chief, explained that FWP is protective of that money. It is banked until needed. The statute is clear that it goes toward species management. FWP prepares a report for the legislature providing information on where the money has been, or will be, spent. FWP has purchased property for habitat purposes with auction/lottery funds in the past.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

7. Repeal Outdated Commission Policies – Final. Paul Sihler, Special Projects Coordinator, reminded the Commission that they had approved a proposal to repeal several obsolete and outdated FWP Commission policies. The public comment period generated two comments in support of the proposal.

Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion that the Commission repeal the obsolete and outdated policies identified in the December 9, 2011 memorandum from Joe Maurier to the FWP Commission. Motion carried.

8. Nevada Spring Creek Water Rights Transfer and Conversion – Endorsement. Bruce Rich, FWP Fisheries Bureau Chief, explained that FWP proposes to look into a water rights transfer involving six water right claims on Nevada Spring Creek. The six Nevada Spring Creek partners who own the current diversionary water rights from Nevada Spring Creek wish to permanently transfer these water rights to FWP through donation or third party purchase. FWP would then convert the consumptive water rights to in-stream flow. Nevada Spring Creek, located in Powell County near Helmville, is a Blackfoot River Basin stream that originates from an artesian spring and flows for approximately 3.2 miles to Nevada Creek prior to its confluence with the main stem of the Blackfoot River. It provides spawning and reproduction habitat for westslope cutthroat trout and other species. Because there are no other consumptive-use rights that divert water from Nevada Spring Creek, the conveyance of these water rights would place all of the consumptive-use rights into FWP ownership and allow for the permanent retirement of the irrigated grounds.

Action: Moody moved and Vermillion seconded the motion that FWP research the transfer of the Nevada Spring Creek water rights to FWP for instream flows, negotiate the terms of the gift, and report back to the Commission with a recommendation for final action. Motion carried.

9. Statewide Fish Management Plan – Update. Bruce Rich, FWP Fisheries Bureau Chief, explained that FWP is developing a plan that will identify FWP's overarching goals and direction for core fisheries programs, to include fish management, aquatic habitat, fishing access and angling opportunities. It will establish management direction for each water body under FWP authority, the management objectives for the fish found in the water bodies, and any special considerations or management issues that apply. It will also provide guidance to FWP and the FWP Commission in the development of future policies and regulations, and will provide the public with an overview on the laws, rules and policies that affect fisheries management and the framework for decision-making and project priority setting. The goal is to propose a draft 10-year plan to the commission in the fall of 2012 and a final plan by the end of the year or early in 2013.

Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion that the FWP Fisheries Bureau proceed with the planning process for a statewide fisheries management plan. Motion carried.

10. No-Wake Areas at all Commercial Boat Marinas Statewide - Administrative Rule – Final. Ron Jendro, Enforcement Bureau, explained that FWP received a letter from Fort Peck Marina owner Tara Waterson requesting that the Commission approve a "No Wake" area near the marina's facilities to alleviate damage to private vessels, the docking system and for boaters loading and unloading vessels due to increased boating traffic. FWP and the Corp of Engineers (COE) met with Mrs. Waterson, after which the COE created a temporary "No Wake" area under their authority. The Marina agreed to properly post with "No Wake" signs and buoys. The COE has addressed violations of a "No wake" area during the interim until FWP develops an approved "No Wake" area. The FWP Commission proposed rules in January, 2012, allowing commercial marinas to establish no wake zones as buoyed. All commercial marinas and the marinas will need approval from the department if they would like to establish a no wake zone beyond 300 feet of the marina docks. Five public comments were received. Two were in support, one suggested that FWP define "no wake" and asked who was responsible for the signs, one suggested that the state put out the signs so they are consistent throughout the state, and two were concerned that the no wake zone would affect recreational opportunities.

Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion to adopt the administrative rules regarding No-Wake Boating Rule for all commercial marinas as buoyed and that no commercial marina establish a no wake zone beyond 300 feet of the marina docks without prior approval from the department and FWP. Motion carried.

11. Keep Cool Hills Cooperative Management Area Biennial Rule – Final. Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Bureau Chief, explained this proposal is for extension of the 15,000-acre Cooperative Management Area north of Lincoln that was established in 2007 to manage public access. Prior to this rule, unmanaged public access resulted in vandalism and resource damage to land in the area, causing landowners to consider closing their land to public access. Sieben Ranch Company owns most of the land, with some parcels owned by the Nature Conservancy and DNRC. This agreement has proven successful, with landowners and FWP pleased with the arrangement.

Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the Keep Cool Hills Hunting Access and Recreation Management Area Biennial Rule.

Rod Bullis expressed support for this agreement.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

12. Stacey Creek Right-of-Way Easement – Final. Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Bureau Chief, explained that FWP proposes to purchase a permanent road easement on Stacey Creek Road, 50 miles south of Miles City, to secure permanent public road access to the Custer National Forest. At this time, there are no public use rights on this section of road. The easement will be granted by the Wood Ranch and will be held by the Forest Service. It will be transferred to FWP in the event that the Forest Service would no longer wish to hold it. FWP will pay the landowner the appraised value of \$20,000 for the easement, with funding coming from the Come Home to Hunt account. Six comments were received, with all but one in support of the proposal. The Forest Service will provide culverts, gravel, and cattle guards, and will prepare a survey.

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to authorize FWP to complete the Stacey Creek access project by funding the acquisition of the road easement that will provide for public use and access to national forest land. The U.S. Forest Service will hold the easement. Motion carried.

13. Marshall Creek WMA Phase III Acquisition – Endorsement. Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Bureau Chief, explained that FWP proposes to initiate the acquisition process for Phase III of the Marshall Creek Wildlife Management Area. FWP purchased the 24,170-acre Marshall Creek WMA from The Nature Conservancy in two phases. These former Plum Creek Timber Company lands, northwest of Seeley Lake, are comprised of undeveloped private land holdings in the upper Clearwater Drainage, including the West Fork Clearwater, Marshall Creek, and most of the Deer Creek main stem. The proposed Phase III acquisition is for the three remaining sections, 1,920 acres, along the southeast border of the WMA. Completion of Phase III would permanently protect the remaining privately-held reach of Deer Creek and secure additional public access to Marshall Creek WMA. FWP proposes to purchase the Phase III parcels from Five Valleys Land Trust using \$3.48 million in funds previously secured from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Habitat Conservation Plan Habitat Acquisition Program. The Fish and Wildlife Service has authorized expenditure of these funds to expand the Marshall Creek WMA.

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to endorse the Department's request to initiate the land acquisition process for Phase III of the Marshall Creek WMA. Motion carried.

14. Full Curl WMA Acquisition – Final. Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Bureau Chief, explained that FWP proposes to complete the fee-title acquisition of approximately 438 acres of property located in Sanders County. This parcel is adjacent to the Flathead Indian Reservation and is located about 10 miles southeast of Plains. The land provides excellent habitat for the Perma-Paradise (Knowles Creek) bighorn sheep herd and mule deer, and the steep cliffs provide critical lambing areas and escape habitat for bighorn sheep. This property would be managed similar to other bighorn sheep WMAs in the lower Clark Fork region. This project compliments ongoing wildlife habitat conservation work by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes on adjacent Tribal lands. The environmental assessment generated ten verbal comments and twenty-two written comments of which all but one were in support of the proposal.

Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion to proceed with negotiations to acquire the Glacier Bank property in fee title utilizing auction funds.

Jim Weatherly, Wild Sheep Foundation, said this has been near and dear to his heart. Strike while the iron is hot. This is what sheep auction dollars are for.

Ben Lamb said this is a great deal. He hopes the Commission moves forward with this.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

15. 2012 Grazing & Sharecrop Leases – Final. Ken McDonald, Wildlife Bureau Chief, presented the lease proposals.

Dome Mountain Grazing Lease

This is a proposal to renew a 3-year agricultural lease with the Kinkie Ranch on about 150 acres of the Dome Mountain WMA. The lessee will cultivate, plant and irrigate alfalfa and grain hay and retain the first cutting. The lessee will control weeds and continue to irrigate the 150 acres of cropland. The regrowth will be left as a food plot for wildlife use during the winter. The primary objective is to retain elk on the WMA to reduce adjacent private land conflicts during the winter and spring.

Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to renew the three-year agricultural lease with the Kinkie Ranch on the Dome Mountain WMA. Motion carried.

Vermillion requested that FWP produce an annual report on management of this land.

Beartooth WMA – Polloch Meadows Ranch Grazing Lease

FWP proposes to renew a six-year lease with Sieben Live Stock Company to graze the 450-acre Pollock Meadows on the Beartooth WMA. Additionally, another 400-acre pasture will be added in the Upper Cottonwood Creek area of the WMA. FWP has had two long-standing grazing leases with Sieben Livestock on 5,050 acres of the Beartooth WMA. Polloch Meadows is largely composed of smooth brome and timothy. As these grasses are not palatable to elk during most of the year without being grazed periodically by livestock, the intent is to use cattle grazing to remove old litter so elk and mule deer will benefit from new re-growth.

Action: Colton moved and Moody seconded the motion to renew the six-year livestock grazing lease with Sieben Livestock on the 450-acre Polloch Meadows portion of the Beartooth WMA and 400 acres in Upper Cottonwood Creek.

Glen Monahan said 90 percent of public lands is used for grazing, which is a detriment to wildlife. Maintenance of fences and weed control are additional cost. Get FWP out of the livestock business for wildlife and sportsmen.

Glenn Hockett, Gallatin Wildlife Association, is concerned about a lack of science involving these proposals. Get into a prescriptive management scenario. Develop a goal and make it clear to the hunting public.

Jim Strong said there used to be a large sheep population there and he thought this was where sheep were going to be reintroduced after disease killed several. Livestock areas have more weeds. This is more like livestock raising than wildlife management. He wants more access in the area.

Virgil Hankey said grazing needs a management plan. Grazing generates new growth. He supports FWP maintaining grazing.

Jay Bodner, Montana Stockgrowers Association, supports the grazing leases. Each has a management plan and partners with FWP. They provide access and acreage for hunting.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

Blackleaf WMA Grazing Lease

FWP proposes to renew a grazing lease with the Pollock Ranch on the Blackleaf Wildlife Management Area for 2012. A four-pasture rest-rotation grazing system was established with the Pollock Ranch in 2002 on 9,000 acres of the Blackleaf WMA to improve vegetative quality. This grazing agreement is aimed at using cattle grazing to maintain or enhance vegetative quality on the Blackleaf WMA for the benefit of wildlife. Year-round and seasonal forage for elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope and other big game will be maintained. Public hunting access on the lessee's property will also be incorporated within the grazing lease.

Action: Vermillion moved and Moody seconded the motion to approve the Blackleaf WMA grazing lease with the Pollock Ranch for 2012.

Glenn Hockett said this lease comes closer to what they want. It is more prescriptive.

An unidentified woman said she encourages the establishment of a Citizen's Advisory Council on WMAs.

Rod Bullis said he encourages maintaining this lease.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

Ear Mountain – Gollehon Ranch Grazing Lease

FWP proposes a 3 year renewal of this grazing lease, established in 1992, with the Gollehon Ranch. It involves a rest-rotation grazing system on the 960-acre north pasture of Ear Mountain WMA to improve vegetative quality on the WMA. The lease is directed at maintaining vegetation on the Ear Mountain WMA for the benefit of wildlife. Year-round and seasonal forage for mule deer and bighorn sheep and other big game will be maintained. Public hunting access on the lessee's property will also be incorporated into the grazing lease.

Action: Moody moved and Colton seconded the motion to renew the Ear Mountain WMA rotational grazing system agreement with the Gollehon Ranch for the 2012 – 2014 period. Motion carried.

Ear Mountain – Salmond Ranch Grazing Lease

FWP proposes to renew the 2,210-acre rest-rotation grazing system that was established with the Salmond Ranch in 1991 on Ear Mountain WMA. This lease will assist in maintaining the vegetation on WMA for the benefit of wildlife, and year-round forage for mule deer, bighorn sheep, and other big game. Public hunting access on the lessee's property will also be incorporated within the grazing lease.

Action: Moody moved and Colton seconded the motion to renew the Ear Mountain WMA rotational grazing system agreement with the Salmond Ranch for the 2012–2014 period. Motion carried.

16. Madison Valley Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction – Endorsement. Ken McDonald, Wildlife Bureau Chief, stated that FWP proposes to initiate an EA process to assess impacts of multi-year releases of a small number of trumpeters in the middle Madison to reestablish breeding in areas where extensive habitat restoration began in 2005. Swans for release would be obtained from the Wyoming Wetland Society, which is the same facility that provided swans for release in Montana's Flathead/Mission and Blackfoot Valleys. Most funding for the proposal will be raised by partner contributions from conservation agencies and groups and from the private sector.

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to endorse the trumpeter swan reintroduction proposal in the Madison and to initiate the formal EA process for the releases as presented. Motion carried.

17. 2013 Potential Bighorn Sheep Transplant and Augmentation – Endorsement. Quentin Kujala, FWP Wildlife Bureau, explained that sheep transplantation is an effective management tool in that it assists population control, creates new populations, and augments existing populations. Funds for transplants will be provided from auction licenses. All sheep will receive health assessments at capture. These management actions are consistent with the Montana Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy.

Source populations have been identified on Wild Horse Island and in the Upper Madison (HD302) for potential transplants during the January, 2013. A potential new release site is proposed in the Bridger Mountains on public and private lands, and augmentation sites have been identified in the Cabinets (HD 123) and in the Kootenai Falls WMA (HD 100). Formal public review process will occur regarding the proposed release in the Bridger Mountains.

Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion to endorse the new augmentation proposals in Region 1 and to proceed with the public process for the potential new release in the Bridger Mountains.

Jim Weatherly, Montana Wild Sheep Foundation, is in favor of this proposal. He is concerned about genetics on Wild Horse Island.

Jim Hockett said this is a great idea. They are working with woolgrowers in the Bridgers.

Jim Bailey is in favor of the proposal.

Mark Albrecht said there is cooperation in the Bridgers. This is an opportunity to get more transplants done. He asked the Commission to support this proposal.

Ben Lamb supports this proposal.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

18. Special Mountain Lion License Allocation Adjustment– Proposed. Quentin Kujala, FWP Wildlife Bureau, presented this proposal to correct / clarify the motion previously made and adopted by the Commission at the February 16, 2012 meeting. Adopted changes included a split or hybrid special license/general quota season in Region 2. The FWP Commission adoption also allowed an unsuccessful special lion license applicant to purchase a general mountain lion license valid in any open general license district in both the fall and winter seasons. This adjustment to special lion license

allocation process was inadvertently made at a statewide scale, instead of only Region 2. At the March 2012 meeting the FWP Commission instructed FWP staff to identify a proposed correction at the April 2012 meeting.

This proposed correction is for any unsuccessful special lion license applicant to be able to purchase a general lion license valid for any open district statewide during the fall season and also for any open quota areas in Region 2 during the winter season.

Action: Colton moved and Moody seconded the motion that the Commission adopt the proposed adjustment and correction to the 2012 and 2013 special mountain lion license allocation process as proposed by FWP. Motion carried.

19. 2012 Mountain Lion Quotas – Proposed.

Proposed changes from 2011 quotas and subquotas are as follows. All other quotas/subquotas (not listed) are proposed to be unchanged from 2011 levels. Quotas apply to “any legal lion” unless otherwise noted and as influenced by female subquotas.

Region 1

HD 100: increase total special licenses from 25 to 30; increase female lion subquota from 10 to 12
HD 101: increase total special licenses from 14 to 17; increase female lion subquota from 5 to 6
HD 102: increase total special licenses from 14 to 17; increase female lion subquota from 4 to 5
HD 103: increase total special licenses from 10 to 12; increase female lion subquota from 4 to 5
HD 104: increase total special licenses from 10 to 12; increase female lion subquota from 4 to 5
HD 109: increase total special licenses from 10 to 12; increase female lion subquota from 4 to 5
HD 110: increase total special licenses from 8 to 10; increase female lion subquota from 3 to 4
HD 120: increase total special licenses from 7 to 8; increase female lion subquota from 3 to 4
HD 121: increase total special licenses from 31 to 37; increase female lion subquota from 7 to 8
HD 122: increase total special licenses from 12 to 14; increase female lion subquota from 5 to 6
HD 123: increase total special licenses from 5 to 6; maintain female lion subquota at 2
HD 124: increase total special licenses from 4 to 5; maintain female lion subquota at 1
HD 130: increase total special licenses from 12 to 14; increase female lion subquota from 5 to 6
HD 132: increase total general license quota from 8 to 10
HD 140: increase total general license quota from 5 to 6
HD 141: increase total general license quota from 5 to 6
HDs 150 & 151: increase total general license quota from 6 to 7

Region 2

NOTE: Proposed special lion licenses are equal to or greater than the total harvest quota represented by the male and female quotas and in most cases are double the male quotas. The general license quota (male and female quotas) will be used to determine how much general license harvest opportunity is available starting February 1. If the lion harvest by special mountain lion licenses meets or exceeds the male and/or female quotas by February 1, there will be no general license harvest opportunity available.

HDs 200 & 201 (Lower Clark Fork): maintain total special licenses at 20; adjust from female lion subquota of 4 to male quota of 10 and female quota of 10

HDs 202 & 203 (Lower Clark Fork): maintain total special licenses at 30; adjust from female lion subquota of 5 to male quota of 15 and female quota of 15

HDs 204, 260 & 261 (Bitterroot): decrease total special licenses from 20 to 10; adjust from female lion subquota of 3 to male quota of 5 and female quota of 2

HD 240 (Bitterroot): decrease total special licenses from 20 to 10; adjust from female lion subquota of 3 to male quota of 5 and female quota of 3

HD 250 (Bitterroot): decrease total special licenses from 20 to 14; adjust from female lion subquota of 3 to male quota of 7 and female quota of 7

HD 270 (Bitterroot): decrease total special licenses from 20 to 14; adjust from female lion subquota of 3 to male quota of 7 and female quota of 7

HDs 280, 281, 284, 293 & portion of 298 east of State Route 141 (Blackfoot): increase total special licenses from 12 to 14; adjust from female lion subquota of 3 to male quota of 7 and female quota of 7

HDs 283 & 285 (Blackfoot): increase total special licenses from 15 to 16; adjust from female lion subquota of 5 to male quota of 8 and female quota of 8

HDs 290, 291, 292, 293 & portion of 298 west of State Route 141 (Blackfoot): decrease total special licenses from 15 to 14; adjust from female lion subquota of 5 to male quota of 7 and female quota of 7

HD 210 (Upper Clark Fork): increase total special licenses from 4 to 7; adjust from female lion subquota of 2 to male quota of 6 and female quota of 1

HDs 211 & 216 (Upper Clark Fork): decrease total special licenses from 10 to 7; adjust from female lion subquota of 4 to male quota of 4 and female quota of 2

HDs 212 & 215 (Upper Clark Fork): increase total special licenses from 4 to 6; adjust from female lion subquota of 1 to male quota of 4 and female quota of 2

HDs 213 & 214 (Upper Clark Fork): increase total special licenses from 2 to 3; adjust from female lion subquota of 1 to male quota of 2 and female quota of 1

Region 3

HDs 300, 302, 328 & 329: adjust 2 legal male lion to 4 legal lion; add female subquota of 2

HD 301: increase total quota from 4 to 6; increase female subquota from 1 to 2

HDs 310/311/360/361/362: increase total quota from 5 to 7; increase female subquota from 1 to 2

HDs 313/393: increase total quota from 5 to 7; increase female subquota from 1 to 2

HDs 313/316: adjust 3 legal male lion to 4 legal lion; add female subquota of 1

HD 314: increase total quota from 4 to 6; increase female subquota from 1 to 2

HD 317: increase total quota from 3 to 6; increase female subquota from 1 to 2

HD 318/335: adjust 2 legal male lion to 4 legal lion; add female subquota of 1

HDs 319 & 341: increase total quota from 3 to 4

HDs 320 & 333: adjust 2 legal male lion to 4 legal lion; add female subquota of 2

HDs 322, 326 & 330: adjust 2 legal male lion to 4 legal lion; add female subquota of 2

HDs 323, 324, 325 & 327: increase female subquota from 1 to 2

HD 331: adjust 3 legal male lion to 5 legal lion; add female subquota of 2

HD 339/343/388: adjust 4 legal male lion to 6 legal lion; add female subquota of 1

HDs 350 & 370: adjust 2 legal male lion to 3 legal lion; add female subquota of 1

HDs 390 & 391: increase total quota from 4 to 6

Region 4

HDs 416, 446, 449, 452 & 454: increase female quota from 6 to 7

HDs 413 & 432: decrease male quota from 6 to 5; increase female quota from 4 to 5

HDs 405, 447 & 471: increase male quota from 2 to 3

Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion to adopt the proposed 2012 lion quotas/subquotas as presented by FWP.

Dan Peterson said he hunted Region 2 for 45 days this year and observed that the female lions are stable with the quotas as they are now. He encouraged keeping female quotas where they are. The tentative recommendations in HDs 250 and 270 are extremely high. He sees new houndsmen every year in that area.

Chuck Piles said the proposed quotas are way too high. The cats will be on the endangered list if kept as high as proposed.

Mark Jennings asked the Commission to keep quotas low or there won't be and cats left - very soon.

Jeff Hahn said he has hunted cats 80 days this year. He has observed that lions are stable now, and he hates to see the increased quota on females that FWP is proposing. If after February 1 lion hunting becomes open to general hunting, all of the lions will be killed. The new proposed hybrid season will get the female quota. Hold the line right now.

Virgil Henke said he has noticed a decline in mule deer. FWP needs to balance lions and wolves. He wants to see increases in female quotas. It may begin to affect livestock in time.

Grover Hedrick said an increase in female quotas will end lions. There will be an over-run with this hybrid season.

An unidentified man stated that he hunts 70 days per season. Do not increase the female quota.

Ken Francisco said there are not that many female lions, and they will not withstand the proposed quota increase. Maintain the quota as it is. This is fixing something that isn't broken, but will break it.

Norbert Wood said he agrees with the FWP proposal.

Rod Bullis said it is easy to wipe out a lion population, and it is hard to bring them back. This is an extermination proposal.

Monte Schnurr said he supports the increase in quota in Region 3.

Jim Strong said it is a sad day in Montana when we cannot sustain an average number of lions. There is more to it than lion reduction.

Mary Ellen Schnurr said FWP must support sustainable populations, and to look at the whole picture. There should not be swings in quotas.

Steve Wilson said he feels the recommended numbers are the right numbers. Lions are resilient. Overharvest is not a worry.

Tony Jones said the number one predator is lions. To recover elk numbers is to reduce lion numbers. He supports the proposal.

Terry Zieg said this proposal will destroy mountain lion populations. The hybrid proposal is not a good move.

Ben Lamb stated that an additional predator is the legislature. They said FWP must manage ungulates "at or below". It is not predator or prey – it is finding a balance with everyone working together. Repeal HB42.

Action: Moody amended the motion that the Commission offer three alternatives for public comment for the tentative mountain lion quotas for the 2012-2013 season, which are:

1 – No action – retain status quo quotas

2 – Current quotas plus 1 in each category

3 – Proposal as presented today – the original motion

Colton recommended going with what has been proposed. Quota choices will cause problems. Trust the science and information he has been provided.

Action on Amendment: Failed due to lack of a second.

Action: Moody moved an alternate motion involving two proposals – the recommended staff proposal and status quo (February decision).

Action on Amendment: Failed due to lack of a second.

Action on Original Motion: Motion carried. One opposed (Moody).

20. Open Microphone.

Ben Lamb spoke to the many habitat issues.

~~~~~

*Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

---

Bob Ream, Chairman

---

Joe Maurier, Director